



Press Statement on Section 3032 of  
HR 10 (9/11 Recommendations Implementation Act of 2004)  
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My name is John Salzberg and I serve as the Washington Representative for the Center for Victims of Torture. I'd like to begin by thanking Congressman Markey for inviting us to speak at this press conference. We are strongly opposed to the provisions contained in HR10 that would permit the United States to send people to countries where they would be at risk of torture.

The Center for Victims of Torture is headquartered in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, with additional offices in Guinea and Sierra Leone, West Africa. It provides care and rehabilitative services to victims of torture. Established in 1985 it was the first such treatment center in the United States and the third in the world. CVT serves as a national leader in the field and led U.S. treatment programs to establish the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Programs, which has 35 member programs in 20 states.

Each year CVT provides care to more than 2,000 torture survivors. They were tortured by governments of both the left and the right. Torture is a common tactic used by repressive governments regardless of their ideology; torture is the most effective weapon against democracy. Many are tortured because they were members of opposition political parties, human rights defenders, religious and trade union leaders, journalists, and others also performing essential functions for a democratic society.

As a treatment center we know first hand the horrendous effects of torture – the physical as well as the psychological wounds. Every day our clients tell us about the brutality they endured. And I can assure you that your imaginations do not do justice to the extraordinary cruelty perpetrated by torturers throughout the world.

Congress has taken bi-partisan action to position the United States as a nation committed to healing torture victims. Under the sponsorship of Congressmen Christopher Smith and Tom Lantos, Congress adopted the Torture Victims Relief Act. Through the Act the Administration is supporting U.S. treatment programs in 20 states, supporting foreign treatment centers in 26 countries, and providing the largest contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, which supports treatment programs in about 60 countries.

*The Center for Victims of Torture (CVT) is the foremost treatment center in the United States for survivors of government-sponsored torture and their families. Based in Minnesota with offices in Washington, DC, Guinea and Sierra Leone, CVT is celebrating more than fifteen years of Restoring the Dignity of the Human Spirit.*

Congress can be proud of this legislative achievement, for it places our nation firmly on the side of healing torture victims. This is a position thoroughly at odds with Section 3032 of HR 10, which would create more torture victims by sending non-citizens to nations that are known to use torture.

Let us keep to the standard we agreed to when ratifying the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Article 3 of that convention states in no uncertain terms: "No State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture." There are no exceptions to this article even in times of war or terrorism.

By adhering to that standard we will reaffirm the United States as a defender of human rights. We place our nation firmly on the side of healing, and firmly against the use of torture—in any and all circumstances.